

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 DHA-02 /067 W
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O R 041615Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2204
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USUN NEW YORK 0529
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 0586

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, CSCE, SHUM, CZ
SUBJECT: CHARTER 77 AFTER NINE WEEKS

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1. SUMMARY: THIS WEEK, THE REGIME FURTHER INTENSIFIED
ITS PRESSURE AGAINST THE CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS, WHILE
EXPERIENCING INCREASED DIFFICULTY IN ATTEMPTING TO PUR-
SUE ITS BUSINESS-AS-USUAL APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT-TO-
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS. THE MEDIA HAVE KEPT UP A NASTY
AD MOMINEM CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHARTER LEADERS PATOCKA,
HAJEK, VACULIK, MLYNAR ET AL. HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

WAS THE DISSIDENTS' SCORING A PUBLICITY POINT BY ARRANGING AN IMPROMPTU MEETING BY PATOCKA WITH DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL (SEPTEL). THE RUMOR CIRCUIT HAD IT THAT NAMES OF ANOTHER 50-ODD SIGNERS WERE TO BE REVEALED AROUND MARCH 1, BUT THEY HAVE NOT SO FAR SURFACED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MAJOR ESTABLISHMENT MOVE AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS TOOK THE FORM OF SHARPLY CRITICAL SPEECHES AT THE CONGRESSES OF THE CZECH AND SLOVAK WRITERS' UNIONS. CZECH UNION CHAIRMAN, JAN KOZAK, DENOUNCED THE CHARTER AS "AN INSTRUMENT OF ANTI-HUMANISTIC FORCES OF IMPERIALISM, THE MOUTHPIECE OF BETRAYAL OF SOCIALISM" AND DENIGRATED THE ACTIVISTS, AS HAS BECOME STANDARD, AS RENEGADES AND TRAITORS. HE REFERRED TO THE ANTI-CHARTER STATEMENT ISSUED BY ESTABLISHMENT ARTISTS AT THE JANUARY 28 MEETING IN THE NATIONAL THEATER (PRAGUE 299) AND ASSERTED THAT AMONG SIGNERS OF THAT DOCUMENT WERE "HUNDREDS WHO AT ONE TIME FOR THEIR ERRORS AND MISTAKES HAD HAD TO LEAVE THE PARTY OR HAD THEMSELVES PUT AWAY THEIR PARTY CARDS IN A SOCIETY'S CONFUSION. AMONG THEM ARE MANY OF THOSE WHOM THE SIGNERS OF CHARTER 77 COULD FORMERLY CONSIDER THEIR FRIENDS AND ALLIES." COMMENT: CHARTER ACTIVISTS HAD EARLIER POINTED OUT THAT SOME OF THE FIGURES WHO HAD LOST OUT IN THE POST-1968 WERE SIGNING THE ANTI-CHARTER STATEMENT AS A MEANS OF REHABILITATING THEMSELVES. KOZAK'S SPEECH IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL REFERENCE TO THIS. IT CONFIDENTIAL

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IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW FAR ALONG THE ROAD TO FULL REHABILITATION SIGNING THE STATEMENT BRINGS THESE PEOPLE. END COMMENT.

3. THE SWISS TELL US THAT PAVEL KOHOUT CONTINUES TO RESIST BEING DISLODGED FROM HIS APARTMENT ON HRADCANT.

4. WE HAVE OBTAINED TWO NEW CHARTER-RELATED DOCUMENTS. ONE IS A LETTER FROM A FORMER PARTY MEMBER AND TEACHER AT THE HIGHER PARTY SCHOOL WHO IS IN FAIRLY REGULAR CONTACT WITH EMBASSY. HE CLAIMS THAT THE REGIME, FOR WHOSE COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE HE HOLDS LOW REGARD, HAS NO IDEA HOW MANY COPIES OF THE CHARTER ARE CIRCULATING. HE ALLEGES THAT SAMIZLAT HAS PRODUCED "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS" OF COPIES AND THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE EXPELLED FROM THE PARTY AFTER 1968 ARE HELPING TO ORGANIZE SUPPORT FOR THE CHARTER. FRG DCM GIESDER TELLS US, INCIDENTALLY,

THAT HIS EMBASSY HAS DONE A STUDY OF THE 1968 EX-PELLEES AND BELIEVES THERE ARE PRESENTLY ONLY ABOUT 270,000 WHO REMAIN UNREHABILITATED.

5. THE OTHER DOCUMENT IS A 5-PAGE SITREP ON CHARTER 77 DATED FEBRUARY 12, WHICH WE ARE POUCHING TO INR/RSE/EE. MUCH OF ITS CONTENT IS A REHASH OF ITEMS WE HAVE REPORTED EARLIER. AMONG THE NEW TIDBITS ARE:

A) AFTER THE CZECH BRETHREN EVANGELICAL CHURCH SYNOD HAD IN AN OPEN LETTER DENIED PRESS REPORTS THAT IT HAD COME OUT AGAINST CHARTER 77, SYNOD ELDER VACLAV KEJR WAS HELD IN RUZYNE PRISON FOR TWO DAYS.

B) THE PEOPLE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED IN NORTHERN BOHEMIA FOR DISTRIBUTING COPIES OF THE CHARTER (PRAGUE 0509) WERE TWO, SO FAR, UNANNOUNCED SIGNERS OF THE CHARTER, A 35-YEAR OLD ATOMIC PHYSICIST
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FROM DECIN AND A 31-YEAR OLD AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER FROM USTI NAD LABEM WHO WERE ACTUALLY FORMALLY ACCUSED OF "AGITATION" FOR DISTRIBUTING COPIES OF

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PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 DHA-02 /067 W
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O R 041615Z MAR 77
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRAGUE 0586

CZECH-LANGUAGE NOVELS, INCLUDING THOSE
OF POST-68 EXILE JOSEF SKVORECKY, PUBLISHED ABROAD.

C) THE ANTI-CHARTER CAMPAIGN RAN INTO RESIS-
TANCE FROM WORKERS, ALTHOUGH NOT FROM MANAGEMENT
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AND PLANT PARTY AND UNION OFFICIALS. MANY WORKERS
DEMANDED THAT THE CHARTER BE READ TO THEM BEFORE
THEY WOULD MAKE UP THEIR MINDS TO CONDEMN IT.
PEOPLE IN FIELDS MORE EXPOSED TO PRESSURE THAN PRO-
DUCTION WORKERS -- IN CULTURE, EDUCATION, MEDICINE,
ETC. -- WERE EASIER SUBJECTS FOR CHARTER FOES TO
WORK ON. THE REGIME IS NOW ALLEGEDLY INCREASINGLY
WORRIED ABOUT THE LOYALTY OF RANK-AND-FILE PRODUC-
TION WORKERS.

D) THE CHARTER HAS BEEN REPRODUCED IN VARIOUS
WAYS AND DISTRIBUTED IN "TENS OF THOUSANDS" OF
COPIES. MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN
A COPY HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT FROM FOREIGN RADIO.

6. THIS DOCUMENT IN SEVERAL PLACES EMPHASIZES THE
NEED FOR SUPPORT FROM INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROGRESSIVE
FORCES, ESPECIALLY WORKERS AND SOCIALIST MOVEMENTS.

7. THE FORMER LAW PROFESSOR WHO FIRST ALERTED THE
PAO LAST DECEMBER THAT THE CHARTER WOULD BE ISSUED,
SAID IN A RECENT CONVERSATION THAT HE BELIEVES THE
MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ONLY MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL, AND IN
FACT FEELS THAT DOMESTICALLY ITS RESULTS HAVE BEEN
NEGATIVE. HE FEARS THAT THE FEW IMPROVEMENTS MADE
BY THE GOC SINCE HELSINKI WILL BE RESCINDED AND
HARDLINERS BROUGHT TO POWER.

8. UNDERSCORING THE EFFORTS OF CZECHOSLOVAK AND SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE CHARTER 77 ADHERENTS, SOVIET MINISTER OF INTERIOR SHCHOLOKOV ARRIVED IN PRAGUE MARCH 1 FOR TALKS WITH CZECHOSLOVAK INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS. AND THE PRESENCE OF PARTY SECRETARIES BILAK, PROBABLY THE MOST OUTSPOKEN PRO-SOVIET HARDLINER IN THE PARTY-STATE LEADERSHIP, AND HAVLIN AT THE SOFIA GATHERING OF WARSAW PACT PARTY FUNCTIONARIES (SOFIA 421)
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PROVIDED ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH-LEVEL CZECHOSLOVAK DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS AND OTHER ALLIES ON THE CURRENT EAST-WEST IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

9. WHILE PARTY WATCHDOGS HERE APPEAR ANXIOUS TO KEEP STEPPING UP THE PRESSURE ON THE DISSIDENTS, THEY HAVE NOT BROKEN THE SPIRIT OF THE LEADING CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS. THE LATTER SEEM AS DETERMINED AS EVER TO CONTINUE THEIR STRUGGLE AS DEMONSTRATED DRAMATICALLY BY PATOCKA'S ACTION IN MEETING FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL -- UNTIL THE EVE OF THE BELGRADE 77 CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE CHARTER 77 GROUP MAY BEGIN TO CRACK UNDER THE STRAIN; WE UNDERSTAND MRS. KOHOUT IS BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF HAVING SUFFERED ENOUGH BECAUSE OF HER HUSBAND'S BATTLE WITH THE AUTHORITIES. MOREOVER, WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT PATOCKA'S DOCTOR HAS PLACED HIM IN A HOSPITAL FOR REST, FOLLOWING AN 11-HOUR POLICE INTERROGATION OF THE 69-YEAR OLD PHILOSOPHER.

10. AT THE SAME TIME, FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK IS DOING HIS BEST TO CONTINUE HIS POLICY OF MAXIMUM, BUSINESS-AS-USUAL CONTACT WITH THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD. THUS, CHNOUPEK HIMSELF HEADED THE LENGTHY LIST OF LOCAL DIGNITARIES AT THE MARCH 3 FORMAL OPENING OF THE NEW FRG CHANCERY. ALSO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL WELCOME A ROUTINE VISIT NEXT WEEK BY THE TURKISH MFA SECRETARY GENERAL AND WILL DISPATCH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SPACIL TO PARIS FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE FRENCH, WHICH WILL DOUBTLESS FOCUS LARGELY ON CSCE QUESTIONS. FRENCH AMBASSADOR D'HARCOURT HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR BYRNE THAT HE EXPECTS THE QUAI D'ORSAY TO EMPHASIZE PRIVATELY FRANCE'S CONCERN OVER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, WHILE PUBLICLY THE FRENCH WILL LIKELY AVOID CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED IN THE EAST AS INTERFERENCE IN INTER-
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NAL AFFAIRS.

11. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT THE TWO ABOVEMENTIONED DOCUMENTS ARE PROBABLY OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE RESPONDING FAVORABLY TO THE CHARTER, WHILE THE LAW PROFESSOR IS OVERLY PESSIMISTIC. THE REGIME'S CONTINUED MASSIVE MEDIA ATTACKS AGAINST THE CHARTER MUST REFLECT SOME FEAR THAT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR IT MAY BE GROWING. THE PRINCIPAL NEW SIGN THAT HARSHER ACTION AGAINST THE CHARTER ACTIVISTS IS BEING CONSIDERED WAS FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK'S STATEMENT TO THE VISITING DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER THAT IF THE WEST PUSHES TOO HARD ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, "CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAS LIMITED MANEUVERABILITY AND YOU WILL FORCE TO TO GO BACK TO THE 1950'S".
BYRNE

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